

other activists said he has been held by state security police on the outskirts of Beijing.

Wolf said the U.S. government should apply more public pressure to seek the release of jailed Chinese dissidents.

"I think you need to do it publicly," he said. "Frankly, they have to be done the way we used to do it with regard to the Soviet Union."

[From the New York Times, July 2, 2008]

CHINA BLOCKS U.S. LEGISLATORS' MEETING

(By Jim Yardley)

BEIJING.—Two United States congressmen who were in Beijing to lobby for the release of more than 700 political prisoners had hoped to have dinner on Sunday with a group of Chinese human rights lawyers. But security agents had a different idea: they detained some of the lawyers and warned the others to stay away.

The incident is the latest example of how Chinese security agents are increasing pressure on dissidents in advance of the Beijing Olympics in August. The ruling Communist Party has issued broader orders for local governments to defuse public protests, as a violent demonstration involving an estimated 30,000 people erupted last weekend in southwestern China.

In Beijing, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said the congressmen, Republicans Frank R. Wolf of Virginia and Christopher H. Smith of New Jersey, had overstepped their visas in arranging to meet the lawyers. The legislators, both sharp critics of China, expressed outrage over the interference by security agents.

"The people we were supposed to have dinner with all got stopped," said Mr. Smith in a telephone interview on Tuesday afternoon. "All of the world is watching, and this kind of behavior doesn't bring anything but more scrutiny to their human rights abuses."

Mr. Wolf called on President Bush to boycott the Olympic opening ceremonies if the detained lawyers were not released and if there was "no progress" on releasing 734 political prisoners on a list the two congressmen presented to the Chinese.

President Bush has been invited to the opening ceremony by Chinese president Hu Jintao and has rejected calls that he not attend.

On Tuesday afternoon, Liu Jianchao, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said the two legislators, who had travel visas, should not have tried to meet with the lawyers. "They should not intervene in China's internal affairs or conduct something that is harmful to China-U.S. relations," he said during a regular news briefing.

Asked if visiting congressmen must get approval from the Chinese government to meet with private citizens, Mr. Liu added: "The two congressmen applied to come to China to get in touch with the United States consulate. We hope the two U.S. congressmen can respect the country they visit and obey Chinese laws. Regarding the issues on religion and human rights, the exchange between the two countries is more meaningful than meeting private citizens."

The congressmen said they came to Beijing to discuss human rights, religious freedom, the Olympics and Darfur. Mr. Smith said they met Monday with the country's former foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing, and gave him their list of political prisoners. "He took it and said they would look at it," Mr. Smith said. "Our argument is that these people have done nothing wrong."

The guest list at the Sunday night dinner was supposed to include three activist lawyers, Li Baiguang, Teng Biao and Li Heping. They were among this year's winners of the "Democracy Award" by the National Endowment of Democracy in Washington. Li

Baiguang and Li Heping have met with President Bush.

On Sunday afternoon, authorities took Li Baiguang to a Beijing suburb, where he was placed under house arrest, according to Chinese Human Rights Defenders, an advocacy group. Mr. Teng, who was also detained earlier this year, was taken to the same Beijing suburb but later returned to his apartment under house arrest. Another well-known lawyer, Jiang Tianyong, was blocked from leaving his apartment by two Beijing police officers, the advocacy group said. Still another lawyer, Li Fangping, said three police officers were stationed outside his apartment and threatened to follow him wherever he went.

The two representatives did manage to meet with a Chinese pastor, Zhang Mingxuan, but Mr. Smith said security agents placed the pastor under house arrest afterward.

The tightened scrutiny of dissidents comes as China is making broader efforts to increase security and curb public protests as the Olympics draw near. On June 8, the central government held a video conference to launch a national campaign to prevent petition campaigns by disgruntled citizens and to stop demonstrations and other "mass incidents" in the name of preserving harmony for the Olympics.

Localized demonstrations have become common in China, especially in rural areas where peasants protest against illegal land seizures and corruption. Often, peasants organize petition campaigns and travel to Beijing to present their grievances. But authorities, concerned about a potentially embarrassing spectacle during the Games, are calling on local officials to solve problems and prevent petitioners from coming to the capital.

The potential for unexpected protests was illustrated over the weekend when thousands of people burned government buildings in the county of Weng'an in Guizhou Province. China Daily, the official English-language newspaper, reported that 30,000 people participated in a "mass action" after a smaller group protested against possible police malfeasance in handling a case that involved the death of a local teenage girl.

Family members of the girl believe she was killed by relatives of local officials. The riot erupted after the police ruled her death a drowning and cleared the officials' relatives. Rioters burned government buildings and smashed police cars. Paramilitary police have since been dispatched to the county to restore order.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF MINERVA, OHIO

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, the village of Minerva, Ohio is celebrating their 175 years of history this July; and

Whereas, the members of the community of Minerva, Ohio are active, enthusiastic members of their area; and

Whereas, Minerva is holding an exciting weekend of tours, garden shows, and historical scenes to commemorate this anniversary; and

Whereas, Minerva continues to be an important and vibrant asset of Southeastern Ohio

and offers an outstanding quality of life to its residents; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend Minerva, Ohio and its citizens for their unwavering commitment, dedication and contributions to their community and country in recognition of their 175 years.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE
HONORABLE J. BENJAMIN EWING

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize the Honorable J. Benjamin Ewing, State Representative for the 35th Representative district for the great State of Delaware. Representative Ewing has represented his district honorably and with great distinction since 1987. However, his public service did not begin then but rather as a young man when he served our country in Korea in the United States Marine Corps and then for 20 years with the Delaware State Police where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His work in community service, government and politics has provided Delawareans and the constituents of his district with tremendous peace of mind knowing that an individual of Representative Ewing's stature was always willing to look after the best interest of his constituents while giving them the best possible service.

During my years as Governor and in the U.S. House of Representatives, I have always enjoyed working with Representative Ewing to assist him and the constituents of his district on issues relating to social security, highways, postal service, development, health care, and the many other issues his constituents face on a daily basis. During his career in government, Ben has always put the people of his district first and worked diligently on their behalf. While the people of the 35th Representative District will elect a new Representative this fall, they will have a difficult time finding a Representative as qualified, humble, or one who works as patiently on a daily basis to assist their each and every need.

Ben was instrumental in identifying the need to renovate and develop the new visitors center in Bridgeville, Delaware as a combined State Police barracks, paramedic unit and service center, and as a result it now bears his name. His commitment to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, NRA, American Legion and his Scottish heritage is without question.

I want to publicly thank, recognize and acknowledge Ben Ewing for his many decades of service and numerous contributions to the State of Delaware. He is an excellent role model for those who aspire to serve their community through public service and he has raised the bar for all who follow in his footsteps. While I will miss working with Ben on a regular basis to solve issues facing our constituents, I hope to continue to seek his counsel and advice on issues of importance to all Delawareans. He has been a good friend to me and all Delawareans.